

News

Message from the Ministers



This summer, we met with members of the new Child and Family Services Authorities at their two-day orientation sessions in Calgary and Edmonton.

We are well aware of the significance of these two gatherings in the social history of this province. We are now witnessing the

unfolding of major plans for a new, innovative, community-based system of services for Alberta's children and families. We are now seeing this vision take firm, tangible shape.

The creation of the 18 Authorities pays tribute to the dedicated work of thousands of Albertans. This planning involved tremendous contributions by steering committees, local working groups, focus groups, and many others. The new Authorities will be guided by these regional plans for child and family services.

We can say with confidence that each Authority board has high integrity. Each Authority is committed to serving children and families in the communities throughout its region.

In the new service system, children and families will benefit from the leadership and insights of community members as well as the expertise and experience of trained professional staff. Children's services staff members will be reassigned to the Authorities from Alberta Family and Social Services. Staff members will report to the Authorities, while retaining status as government employees.

In the coming months, the Authorities will work closely with the government in preparation for the transition to the community-based system in the spring of 1999. As we move forward, it will be essential for all players in this initiative to communicate effectively with one another. This newsletter will help facilitate that kind of communication. We will publish it monthly over the coming year so that you're kept informed and up-to-date on new developments.

We look forward to meeting regularly with the Authority Co-chairs. There are challenges ahead, there are exciting and innovative times ahead, and more time and energy will be invested. But the end result promises to be a more flexible and responsive system that better meets the needs of children and families throughout Alberta.

Dr. Lyle Oberg
Minister, Family and Social Services



Pearl Calahasen
Minister without Portfolio
Responsible for
Children's Services

What's new. . . .

Boards appointed

As of mid-June, community board members had been announced for all 18 Child and Family Services Authorities. The new Authorities are now carrying out their first major task: the development of three-year business plans for the delivery of child and family services in their regions. The Calgary Rocky View Authority completed its business planning and came into operation last spring.

On tour

Pearl Calahasen, Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Children's Services, will be travelling across Alberta to meet with Authority boards over the fall and winter months. It's one of the ways in which the Minister plans to maintain a two-way dialogue with the Authorities.

Kick-off meeting

The co-chairs of the 18 Authorities will meet together as a province-wide council for the first time on September 22 and 23 in Edmonton. The co-chairs will be looking at matters related to the council's organization and interregional relationships. The meetings will provide an important forum for discussion among the Authorities, and between the Authorities and Ministers.

Recruiting CEOs

Processes are underway for the recruitment of Chief Executive Officers to the Authorities. Each Authority has been developing its own recruitment plan for advertising, for applications, and for interviewing CEO candidates. The CEO will carry out the directions of the Authority board, manage the day-to-day operations of the Authority, ensure that provincial policies are met, and see that the regional service system runs effectively.

Cross-Ministry Initiatives

Preventing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

Family and Social Services is leading a cross-departmental effort to address Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). FAS is a medical condition found in children that results from mothers drinking alcohol during pregnancy. With \$1 million in funding, AFSS is working in partnership with other departments, agencies and community partners such as AADAC, Education, Health, Justice, Community Development, and Health Canada.

The initiative's goals are to reduce the number of FAS births as well as providing support to families dealing with FAS. Staff from I&EP, Child Welfare, as well as contracted agencies and foster parents are now being trained on the management of FAS. Other initiatives will be announced in mid-October.

For project information or training/case management opportunities contact Sharon Heron (415-2141) or Lee Ann Tyrrell (422-5640).

Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution

Proclamation of this new legislation is targeted for early 1999 after supporting programs and services have been developed.

During the next few months, the Department and the Child & Family Services Authorities will prepare comprehensive plans for the operation of protective safe houses – houses that are safe, planned appropriately and meet the requirements of the new legislation.

Voluntary services will also be developed to help children leave prostitution and to support families whose children have returned home.

In November, a multi-disciplinary orientation will be held for community agencies as well as social workers, police, health care providers, and teachers.

Child and Family Services Authorities Secretariat is up and running

The Child and Family Services Authorities Secretariat is up and running. Led by David Steeves, the Secretariat is in place to provide support to the Authorities. Contact the Secretariat at 415-0085.

(To be connected toll-free, dial 310-0000.)

Co-Chairs of the Child and Family Authority Boards



- Region 1:** Sharon Holtman, Don Funk
- Region 2:** Deborah Lloyd, Gitta Hashizume
- Region 3:** Dodie Gaudry, Andrea Fugeman-Mi
- Region 4:** Art Cunningham, David Pickersgill
- Region 5:** Gil Carriere, Wil Porat
- Region 6:** Sarah Schug, Roger Clarke
- Region 7:** Sharon Sawchuk, Cathy Charlton
- Region 8:** Doug Stephenson, Marie Anstey
- Region 9:** Gerry Donahue, Marilyn Dunn
- Region 10:** Garry Gairdner, Morley Handford
- Region 11:** Mark Calliou, Micky Ross Carleton
- Region 12:** Ralph Whitford, Larry Langager
- Region 13:** Joseph Courtepatte, Claudia Buck
- Region 14:** Bill Cardinal, Dianne Lavoie
- Region 15:** Evelyn Thunder, Dexter Dombro
- Region 16:** Merle Rudiak, Mike Noon
- Region 17:** Corrine Card, Freddi Bromling
- Region 18:** Sonya Kobelsky

For More Information:

Available on the Ministry web page
[www.gov.ab.ca/fss] are the following:

- an overview of the redesign of child and family services
- information on standards, accountability, and funding
- a list of board members for each Authority

For general information about Child and Family Services, call 427-4801.

To be connected toll-free, dial 310-0000.